

REGISTER OF CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS

Title of Publication: Ghost World

Other Known Title: Not Stated

Format: Comic

Director/Author: Daniel Clowes

Producer/Publisher: Jonathan Cape

Country of Origin: UK

Language: English

Applicant: Julie Anne Gordon

Distributor: Not Stated

Classification:	Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 16 years.
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Descriptive Note: Contains offensive language and sexual themes.

Display Conditions: That when the publication is on public display, the classification given to the publication must be shown by way of a label issued in accordance with a direction under section 36A(2);

and

That the label must be affixed to the publication in order that the classification is brought to the attention of persons to whom the publication is displayed

Date of entry in Register: 14 March 2007

Date of direction to issue a label: 13 March 2007

OFLC No: 602814

Excisions: Not Applicable

Reasons for excisions:

Not Applicable

**Summary of reasons
for classification:**

The comic book *Ghost World* is classified as:

Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 16 years.

Ghost World is a hard-covered comic book (a "graphic novel") that collates eight stories which first appeared during the 1990s in serial form in an "alternative" comic book series. The stories are a warm and humorous evocation of teenage angst, with a focus on character and relationships and with a strong satirical edge. The narrative thread follows two inseparable teenage girls through a period at the end of their high school years when they try on new identities and, rather unwillingly, face adulthood. The publication has considerable artistic merit and cultural value: it has been praised by critics and the cartoonist has won awards for his work. However, *Ghost World* contains considerable sexual material that reflects the age-appropriate interests and sexual curiosity of 18-year old girls. It also makes extensive use of offensive language and includes storylines that deal with issues such as child pornography. It is clearly intended for mature readers.

The likelihood of injury to the public good if the publication is generally available has been weighed against the relevant provisions of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. The comic format has traditionally been aimed at, and popular with, children and young people generally. However, given the extent and degree to which, and the manner in which the publication deals with sexual themes and scenarios, restricting its availability to older teenagers and adults is reasonable and demonstrably justifiable. This limitation on the publication's availability is the minimum restriction required to prevent injury to the public good.